



U.S. Senator Wayne Allard
U.S. Senator Ken Salazar



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**SENATORS ALLARD, SALAZAR
OFFER AMENDMENT TO RESOLVE
ROCKY FLATS MINERAL RIGHTS ISSUE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) and Ken Salazar (D-Colorado) on Monday introduced an amendment to the FY 2006 Defense Authorization bill that will resolve the problem of mineral rights at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site so that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plans to create a national wildlife refuge at the site can move forward upon cleanup and closure of the site.

"The amendment we introduced today is the legislative culmination of 18 months of negotiation among the federal government, the State of Colorado and the mineral rights owners. It specifically excludes the option of condemnation, making it a fair and equitable settlement for both the government and private interests involved," Senator Allard said. "This is a win-win situation and will allow us to complete the transfer of responsibility for the site from the Department of Energy to the Department of the Interior (which oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)."

"Securing the private mineral rights at Rocky Flats is an important step for the people of Colorado. We will forever protect the tall grass prairie at Rocky Flats from destruction by future mining operations, and we will preserve this precious habitat as a home for the wildlife of our State. And we will do this the right way, by making sure that mineral rights owners are compensated fairly and voluntarily," Senator Salazar said.

In 1997, Senator Allard successfully led effort in Congress to expedite the cleanup and closure of the Rocky Flats site, which resulted in moving back the closing date from 2070 to 2006.

In 2001, Congress enacted Senator Allard's legislation that creates the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. It requires the Department of Energy to transfer most of the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site to the Department of Interior for the purpose of creating a wildlife refuge to preserve Colorado's unique Front Range habitat once cleanup of the site is complete. This transfer has been delayed because of disagreements over privately-owned mineral rights.

Senator Salazar has worked for many years to clean the pollution at Rocky Flats and to bring to reality a wildlife refuge that will serve the people and the natural wildlife of Colorado forever. Senator Salazar served as a trustee of Colorado's natural resources when he was Colorado's Attorney General and when he was the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Health. He has worked very hard to combine the cleaned open space at Rocky Flats — the wildlife refuge — with the open space of the communities that surround it. This entire area will truly become one of Colorado's crown jewels — right in the midst of the heavily populated Front Range.

“The solution proposed in this amendment enjoys broad support, including the endorsement of Governor Bill Owens of Colorado, the Colorado Attorney General, and local officials at Rocky Flats,” Senator Allard said.

Rocky Flats is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and manufactured components for nuclear weapons for the nation’s defense until 1992. The current mission of the plant is closure – environmental cleanup, waste management and decommissioning – by December 2006. The industrial complex of more than 100 buildings is located in the center of about nine square miles of undeveloped land 16 miles northwest of downtown Denver. The final shipment of transuranic nuclear waste was shipped from the site in April of this year.

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